

4. Education Curriculum – National Geographic Society

Overview

This lesson introduces students to the concept of wilderness and the role that wilderness preservation has played throughout American history. Students will conduct research on different historical wilderness issues or events, and analyze those events in the context of the political and cultural climate of that particular time.

Connections to the Curriculum

Geography, Environmental Studies, American History

Connections to National Geography Standards

Standard 6: How Culture and Experience Influence People's Perceptions of Places and Regions

Standard 13: How the Forces of Cooperation and Conflict Among People Influence the Division and Control of Earth's Surface

Standard 14: How Human Actions Modify the Physical Environment

Time

Three to four hours

Materials

1. Internet access
2. Wilderness fact sheet: www.wilderness.net/nwps_agencies.cfm
3. Wilderness timeline www.wilderness.net/nwps/learn.cfm

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Define wilderness.
- Describe key players and events in the history of wilderness preservation.
- Research and analyze one historical wilderness issue or event.
- Design a newspaper from the day of their assigned wilderness event; link the wilderness event to politics, culture, and other historical events.

Opening

1. What is wilderness?

Ask the students to list words or phrases that come to their mind when they hear the word wilderness. Divide the students into small groups and give each group a different quotation about wilderness. Ask each group to take a few minutes to discuss their quotation, and to try to determine the author's perspective on wilderness. How might the author define wilderness? What do you think the author thinks is the purpose or role of wilderness?

Possible quotations to use:

We simply need wilderness available to us, even if we never do more than drive to its edge and look in.

—Wallace Stegner, 1960

(Wilderness preservationists) worship trees and sacrifice human beings to those trees. They want to save things they like, all for themselves.

— Charles Fraser, paraphrased in *Encounters with Archdruid*, by John McPhee 1971

Wildlife once fed us and shaped our culture. It still yields us pleasure for leisure hours, but we try to reap that pleasure by modern machinery and thus destroy part of its value.

— Aldo Leopold 1948

Without enough wilderness America will change. Democracy, with its myriad personalities and increasing sophistication, must be fibred and vitalized by regular contact with outdoor growths—animals, trees, sun warmth and free skies—or it will dwindle and pale.

—Walt Whitman

In wilderness is the miracle of life, and behind it our scientific accomplishments fade to trivia.

—Charles Lindbergh, 1967

We did not think of the great open plains, the beautiful rolling hills, and winding streams with tangled growth, as “wild.” Only to the white man was nature a “wilderness” and only to him was the land “infested” with “wild animals” and “savage” people. To us it was tame. Earth was bountiful and we were surrounded with the blessings of the Great Mystery.

—Chief Luther Standing Bear, of the Oglala band of Sioux.

Nature is no great mother who has borne us. She is our creation. It is in our brain that she quickens to life.

—Oscar Wilde

Wilderness lovers like to speak of the equal rights of all species to exist. This ethical cloaking cannot hide the truth that green missionaries are possibly more dangerous, and certainly more hypocritical, than their economic or religious counterparts.

—Ramachandra Guha

2. After each group has discussed their own quotation, conduct a “human likert-scale” activity with the whole class: Place a sign that says AGREE on one side of the room and DISAGREE on the other side of the room. Have the groups read their statements or quotations about wilderness and have the rest of the students move to the place in the room that best represents their own opinion on the statement. A student who strongly agrees with a statement should walk all the way to the AGREE side, a more neutral student should stay in the middle of the room, etc. Allow a few minutes of discussion on some of the quotations; as students’ opinions change throughout the discussion, they should move towards the appropriate spot in the room.
3. Discuss the different ways that wilderness was represented in these quotations. What are reasons for such different perspectives on wilderness? (the time period, the different values of the author, the context in which it was said) Explain that throughout American history, wilderness has meant different things to different people; there have been debates about what it *is* and what, if anything should be “done” with it. Explain that they will each research a particular moment in the history of wilderness preservation, and analyze the different perspectives of wilderness represented in the debate.

Development

1. Before giving the assignment, go over some background information on wilderness. Hand out, or use an overhead to display the Definition of Wilderness section of the 1964 Wilderness Act (http://www.wilderness.net/nwps/legis/nwps_act.cfm). Explain that the legal definition of wilderness is based on this law, which sets aside portions of public lands to be preserved and protected from development. Hand out the one-page wilderness fact sheet (www.wilderness.net/nwps_agencies.cfm) and the wilderness timeline <http://www.wilderness.net/nwps/learn.cfm>. BRIEFLY, discuss the basics of wilderness designation.
2. Divide the students into small groups; give each group one of the following newspaper headlines and corresponding year:

“New York voters’ approval of new constitution preserves Adirondack Park as *Forever Wild*,” 1894

“Despite protests from wilderness supporters, President Wilson signs law allowing a dam to flood Yosemite’s Hetch Hetchy Valley,” 1913

“Conservation leaders establish new organization called The Wilderness Society; Forester Bob Marshall takes command,” 1935

“Sierra Club director, David Brower, leads successful opposition to development at Dinosaur National Monument,” 1955

“President Lyndon Johnson signs landmark wilderness legislation,” 1964

“President Carter signs Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), adding 56 million acres to the National Wilderness Preservation System,” 1980

“California Desert Protection Act brings the National Wilderness Preservation System up to 104.7 million acres,” 1994

Have each group of students create a newspaper or front page of a newspaper that includes their assigned headline. They should research other events that took place during that year and can include in their paper other news stories, editorials, advertisements, cartoons, etc.— as long as they are all historically accurate in both content and style. The article corresponding to their assigned headline should be an analysis of that wilderness event that:

- Provides basic factual information about the event or issue.
- Describes any debate that led to this event, describing the main arguments of those supporting this action and those opposing it.
- Links the event to other events occurring in the United States at the time; explains what, if any, influence the current political climate had on their wilderness event.

Closing

Have each group give an oral presentation of their newspaper to the rest of the class. One option is to present a skit in which a group of people or a family reads their newspaper and discusses the day’s news with each other. They could also present a news “broadcast” that highlights the day’s events.

Assessment

Give the students copies of all of the groups’ newspapers. Using the newspapers as the main resource, have each student write an essay on trends in wilderness preservation history, and on how wilderness preservation has been linked to other events and political issues throughout American history.

Extending the Lesson

Have the students role-play a debate on one of these historical wilderness issues, or have them research a current wilderness issue and analyze it within the context of politics and culture. One issue the students could research is the current debate about drilling for oil in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Have the students design a current newspaper front-page, summarizing the ANWR debate and the most relevant related issues and news stories. OR, ask the students to predict how this issue will be resolved in the future and have the students design a newspaper front page in the year 2007.

Have the students pretend that Congress has proposed a new holiday to honor or commemorate American wilderness. Have the students submit a “design proposal” for that new holiday to Congress that includes a description of what this commemoration should be like. Should it be a happy celebration? A somber memorial? How should the history of American wilderness be represented? Their design can include sketches, maps, or whatever they need to make their proposal compelling.

Related Internet Links

www.wilderness.net
www.wilderness.org

4. Education Curriculum – Olympic National Park

Olympic National Park Advanced Wilderness Education Experience Summary - Bryan Bell

In August 2002 Olympic Park Institute (OPI) and Olympic National Park (with financial help NPS Leave No Trace funding) hosted the Advance Wilderness Education Experience, a 13-day program designed to introduce nine high school-aged students from the North Olympic Peninsula of Washington State to Olympic National Park, the Olympic Wilderness, and to Leave No Trace (LNT).

The program began on the afternoon of August 10 at the OPI campus located on the shores of Lake Crescent at the northern end of the park. The program was lead by two OPI instructors and WRO Leave No Trace Coordinator Bryan Bell (ONP). On Sunday the students were introduced to the idea of federally designated Wilderness; what wilderness means to different people; why wilderness is important and to Leave No Trace camping. Each student was given an LNT topic to teach to the rest of the group. On Monday the group headed out to the Wilderness Coast of Olympic National Park for a three-day backpack trip. The group would learn to deal with tides; steep rope ladders that are used to access overland trails around hazardous headlands; teach each other wilderness skills and Leave No Trace topics; watch some amazing sunsets and moonsets as well as enjoy the Perseid Meteor Shower. The students would complete the requirements to become LNT Trainers by the end of the course.

After three sunny days on the coast, the group returned to the OPI campus for 2 nights to regroup and repack for the next hike. After a few good hot meals in the OPI dining hall, the group was ready to head out on the next hike up to the Seven Lakes Basin in the Sol Duc area of the park. The first night was spent at Sevenmile Camp where the group participated in a debate on wolf reintroduction at Olympic National Park. Each student was given a group to represent and a perspective to debate. This activity proved to be one of the best experiences in the 13-day program. At times during the debate, we were rolling on the ground laughing and at others we wept.

Another LNT activity for the second hike was for each student to formulate two or three questions relating to their LNT topic that each would ask visitors encountered along the trail. This activity also proved to be a great learning tool for the students and for the instructors. Some of the visitors gave the students great ideas of how they Leave No Trace and at other times the AWEE students were able to educate other visitors how to Leave No Trace.

Each student had their own personal journal that contained blank paper for writing and sketching as well as Wilderness Quotes and selections from wilderness writers like Aldo Leopold. At different times throughout the hikes and on the OPI campus, the students were asked to write poems; write down something inspiring; or sketch something in their journal. Many of the writings and/or sketches were very inspiring. At times, the instructors were blown away with some of the beautiful poems and drawings the students read or showed to us.

Here is an example:

The wolves' howls are missed
Long mournful sounds, gone away
Replaced by silence

Small and gentle thing
Ladybug on my hand
Safety and peace found

A Mystical thing
Magic in our hearts and minds
Believe in Magic

—Kris

The last major component of the program was on the second to last day when a group of kids from the Port Angeles Boys and Girls club visited OPI. The B&GC kids would spend the night at OPI and the AWEE students acted as mentors and taught the B&GC kids about Olympic National Park, plants, wildlife, ecosystems and much more.

In my humble opinion, this type of education should be a focus of the National Park Service and any other organization interested in wilderness education. Many of the students were reluctant to leave after the closing ceremonies. They learned a great deal about wildness, wilderness, national parks, wilderness management issues, themselves, and each other. These kids will never forget their experience, and neither will I.

Hold on though! The students went home but the program is not over. Over the next year, the AWEE students will participate in a number of other programs. There will be a few more Boys and Girls Club campouts at OPI, Student naturalist programs at the park and I will work with interested AWEE students to develop a web site by kids for kids about the Olympic Wilderness and Leave No Trace.

If anyone has questions about the AWEE program or would like more details, please feel free to contact me.

Special thanks to Kathy Farrier formerly of Olympic Park Institute and now at Great Sand Dunes National Monument for doing a lot of the work to make this program happen and thanks to OPI instructors Erik Wilson and Tracy Beals (now LNT Trainers) as well as Kathy's replacement at OPI Kaeley O'leary for all of their hard work and commitment and especially for the love for the park and for wilderness.

Bryan Bell
Olympic National Park
600 East Park
(360) 565-3102
bryan_bell@nps.gov

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Olympic National Park Advanced Wilderness Education Experience Program - Erik Wilson

“Some notes on the program: It rocks—Many students are seeing the backcountry for the first time and loving it, friendships are being made that could potentially last a while, and we have a connection with them that goes beyond just natural history or teaching. It is a connection that sponsors them in the community. I consider this, as an instructor and philosophically (in environmental education), the finest program OPI runs. The LNT theme worked out beautifully.”

Aug. 17, 2002 – Journal entry
CB FLATS, ONP
Erik Wilson, 3rd year Instructor

SATURDAY 8/10:

An entire afternoon of preparation and building understanding of the program and participants.

- Commitments and contract agreements
- Campus Tour
- Islands (Migration Station) challenge
- Free Time
- Name game with Frisbee
- Hopes and fears
- Overview of program with white board
- Creating the ideal community exercise
- Musical painting for journal covers
- What is wilderness? Journal exercise
- Night walk and meteor shower observations

SUNDAY 8/11

Preparation for Backpacking and Leave No Trace introduction.

- Complete journals
- Whale watch
- Montreal canoe session to mouth of Barnes Creek, with lecture and discussion on history of ONP
- Packing lesson with white board and OPI gear
- Pack the backpacks
- LNT video
- LNT talk and skit preparation
- LNT skits
- Tie dye bandanas for journey
- Check-in with nature writing readings

MONDAY 8/12:

Coastal hike. Third Beach to Scott's Creek

- Pack
- Collect bear canisters from Forks
- Hike
- LNT talks
- Wading in the ocean
- Set up camp
- Wilderness Act discussion
- Check-in
- Sunset journal Senses poem

TUESDAY 8/13:

Day hike to Toleak Point. Wilderness theme

- Hike to Toleak Point
- LNT talks
- Tide-pool lessons and exploration
- Sketching- 10sec, then 30 sec, then 2 min periods of sketching different subjects
- Wading in the ocean
- Alcans and Bumbas, and cultural discussion
- Electric fence challenge
- Wallace Stegner reading to 30 min journal session

Respond to Thoreau's quote: "In Wildness is the Preservation of the world"

WEDNESDAY 8/14:

Back to OPI

- Hike out
- Clean up with ice cream
- Free time
- Movie – "Never Cry Wolf"
- Wolf legends readings from "Shared Spirits"

THURSDAY 8/15:

Day of preparation for activities with Boys and Girls Club Students

- Meet a tree
- River of Slime challenge
- Laundry
- EiT1 – forest ecology
- Rhythm maker game
- Predator/prey
- Deer ears
- Journals
- LNT interview questions and photo preparation
- Good mentor and leadership qualities – What are my strengths? Discussion
- Food prep for backpacking
- Individual Check-in with each participant:
 - a. How are you doing?
 - b. Is there anything you can identify as something the group can work on for the next section?
You can work on?
- Skins and skulls
- Microscopes
- Activity prep for B&G club

FRIDAY 8/16:

Hike to Seven-Mile Group Site

- Pack, Drive, Hike
- LNT interviews of other hikers (At the right times, the leader would introduce our group to other visitors and ask permission to question them about LNT. Each encounter averaged 2-3 questions.)
- LNT talks
- Set up Camp
- Wolf Debate
- Aldo Leopold reading

SATURDAY 8/17:

High Divide hike from Seven-Mile Camp to CB Flats (Below Hoh Lake)

- Pack, hike
- LNT interviews
- Set up camp
- Check-in
- Journal – What have I learned on this trip?
 - a. How have I grown?
 - b. What do I want to remember from this trip?

SUNDAY 8/18:

CB FLATS to Deer Lake

- Pack and hike up to Bogachiel Peak
- Journal – haikus and landscape sketching
- LNT interviews
- Set-up camp
- Check-in
 - a. Highs and lows of trip
 - b. What are you looking forward to when you return to your world?
 - c. What are you not looking forward to?
- Park Management discussion –
If you were a manager of this park, how would you deal with these core issues:
 - a. Human Waste Disposal
 - b. Food Storage
 - c. Too many people in some areas(Discussion was then continued to bridge it from the wilderness to global issues about food, water, and overpopulation.)

MONDAY 8/19:

Deer Lake out to Sol Duc Falls TH

- Sleep in
- Pack and hike
- LNT interviews
- Set up camp at OPI
- Clean up gear and selves
- B&G club prep
 - a. Schedule overview
 - b. Attention getters
 - c. Discipline
 - d. Positive attitude
- Campfire
 - a. Songs
 - b. Trail skits
 - c. Stories
- B&G club schedule
- Sunset (epic!)